

Intern Job Description

Job Title: Coral Reef Classroom Assistant
Location: Key Largo, FL and Key West, FL
Stipend: Unpaid Internship
Dates of Positions: April 1 - May 30
Time Commitment: 2 months (or longer)

Summary of Position: The Coral Reef Classroom intern assists the Coral Reef Classroom Instructors in field and classroom programs. (Please see description below.) Interns will be trained use of water quality sampling equipment and should be experienced swimmers/snorkelers. First Aid certification is a plus but not a requirement for this position.

Duties:

- Participate as a full member of Coral Reef Classroom teaching team. Instruct students in use of water quality sampling equipment on boat. Assist students in completion of Data Log.
- Chaperone students in the water during snorkel tour of reef.
- Assist Coral Reef Classroom Instructors in maintenance of equipment.
- Maintain records and assist Coral Reef Classroom Coordinator with test correction and development of statistics.

Benefits:

- Experience as environmental education instructor in classroom and field programs.
- Experience in planning, conducting, and evaluating marine education program.
- Opportunities to contribute to improvement of program.
- Fun days on the water.
- College credit, if appropriate.
- Letters of recommendation provided upon successful completion of the internship.

Qualifications:

- Current or past participation in a program of study leading to a basic understanding of the principles of ecology as they apply to estuarine and nearshore marine ecosystems: a BS degree or higher is desirable, but not required.
- Must enjoy working with young people (usually middle school students) and be comfortable on a boat and chaperoning students while snorkeling.
- Good written and verbal skills.
- Must have own transportation.

Certification Required: First Aid, Lifesaving and SCUBA helpful but not required.

Training Provided: On-the-job training.

For further information contact:

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Coral Reef Classroom Description:

Coral Reef Classroom, a project of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, has provided free educational excursions to the reef for over 2,000 local students and teachers since 1991. Environmental stewardship is highlighted as students develop their own hypotheses about the condition of essential habitats, record and compare field observations, and discuss ecosystem management strategies.

The objectives of Coral Reef Classroom are to teach basic coral reef biology and concepts of habitat interdependence by engaging students in activities such as water quality sampling, data collection, and evaluation. These exercises encourage analytical thinking, demonstrate the role management plays in protecting natural resources, and inform students about careers in environmental science.

Each Coral Reef Classroom program includes a shoreside presentation and a boat trip to the coral reef. During the classroom session, students experience their first hands-on practice with the Niskin bottle, Secchi disc, refractometer, dissolved oxygen kit, wind meter, and compass. The Coral Reef Classroom instructor, using examples illustrated with colorful slides, guides discussion about coral reef ecology.

During the field trip, the instructor and trained volunteers assist students with sampling methods at each of three stations on the boat. Students learn how to collect and record oceanographic data and the importance of monitoring the condition of the coral reef ecosystem. A plankton tow near the reef site emphasizes marine biology as students collect, observe, and identify plankton and explain its importance in the food web. The remainder of the field trip is spent snorkeling at a Florida Keys reef, where the instructor and volunteers offer guidance and ensure safety in the water.

Enthusiastic support by community volunteers and charter businesses in the Keys has made this program possible and they provide a vital link in students' exploration of career possibilities. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary also offers Coral Reef Classroom to out-of-county groups who charter their own boat (subject to staff availability.)